

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 553

By Casada

A RESOLUTION relative to the Removal Act of 1830 and the Trail of Tears.

WHEREAS, the great State of Tennessee has a proud and successful heritage of playing significant roles in the recorded history of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the first independent democratically governed communities in the United States were four settlements located in what is now East Tennessee, one of which was known as the Watauga Settlement; and

WHEREAS, reconciliation has occurred between the descendants of these settlements through the passage in Carter County of Resolution 516 on April 19th, 2010, which resolution was accepted by members of the Cherokee Nation on April 24, 2010; and

WHEREAS, we, the citizens of Tennessee, acknowledge the significant role that the Native American people have played in allowing the birth of American freedom to first take root with tribal approval in East Tennessee, such as the efforts of Nancy Ward who saved the lives of many at the French Lick settlement from which our petition for statehood would emerge. Because of her diplomatic role, Nancy Ward saved the lives of many Cherokees by preventing further bloodshed of her tribe; and

WHEREAS, in subsequent years prior to 1830, relationships with all Native American Nations deteriorated dramatically, leading up to the tragedy of the forced removal of the native people and subsequent confiscation of their homes and lands through the passage of the Removal Act of 1830; and

WHEREAS, the Trail of Tears resulted directly from the passage of the Removal Act of 1830; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee has a dual role in both the passage of the Removal Act by President Andrew Jackson, and in the historic opposition of the Act through the efforts of United States House of Representative member, David Crockett, representing the 9th District in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a Proclamation of Repentance signed by the Mayor and the Council Chairman of the City of Chattanooga was delivered to the Principal Chief and the tribal council of the Cherokee Nation on October 15, 2006, and then soon thereafter to the Principal Chief and the leadership of the Eastern Band Cherokee in March 2008; and

WHEREAS, for the 175th anniversary of the Trail of Tears that began in May 1838 and concluded in Indian Territory in March 1839, the State of Tennessee wishes to both acknowledge this tragedy and renounce any role it may have played in what is a stain on our collective histories; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we, the citizens of the State of Tennessee, stand with our Statesman, David Crockett, on a national level in acknowledging the tragedy of this act that took place in defiance of the Supreme Court ruling by Chief Justice John Marshall in *Worcester vs. Georgia*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, the citizens of the Volunteer State, following the example of David Crockett, offered up our lives in the ultimate sacrifice in defense of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of all people. The global battlefields are stained with the blood of many Tennesseans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, the citizens of Tennessee, wish to close this chapter in our collective history, so that our past does not cast a shadow over our future. Tennesseans stand against acts of injustice perpetrated against any people or group regardless of race, gender, or religion. Therefore, we offer our sincere regret to the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Yuchi, Creek, Choctaw, and Shawnee Nations and all Native American Nations who were tragically and unjustly confined and removed from their lands by our participation in the

Removal Act of 1830 and the subsequent death march known as the Trail of Tears. Greed and prejudice have no part to play in the future of Tennessee. We stand today as David Crockett stood, prepared to lay down our lives in defense of freedom for all people in this great nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.